

Twisting Lemons Into Lemonade by TheSubtextMachine

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: 4 disasters 1 car, F/F, Gen, I love summer!!, I'm getting a lot of vibes from the "dogfight" OBC recording, Sleepovers, Truth or Dare gone right, Will update tags, general teenage exploits of friends who just love each other, no one is straight

Language: English

Characters: Jonathan Byers, Kali Prasad, Nancy Wheeler, Steve Harrington

Relationships: Jonathan Byers/Steve Harrington, Kali Prasad & Nancy Wheeler & Steve Harrington & Jonathan Byers, Kali Prasad/Nancy Wheeler

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2018-04-12

Updated: 2018-07-02

Packaged: 2022-04-22 05:07:13

Rating: Teen And Up Audiences

Warnings: No Archive Warnings Apply

Chapters: 2

Words: 2,737

Publisher: archiveofourown.org

Summary:

Snapshots of pictures from the perfect summer, complete with romance, great lipstick, and sweaty afternoons at a diner with best friends.

You can leave chapter prompts in the comments!

1. June 1st

Summer rolled into Nancy's life like a cherry red sports car: slowly and with the luxury of models in glossy fashion magazines.

School itself let out with a long sigh of relief, complete with Steve's graduation and enough babysitting cash to pay for a bunch of meals at the diner that Steve got a job at. She splurged a couple dollars on a nice red lipstick, the kind of accessory that would be guaranteed to become a staple in her summer look.

The day that school ended, Nancy was officially avoiding the inevitable high school party, instead she opted to spend another aimless all nighter with Kali, Steve, and Jonathan.

The week before, they had agreed on starting the summer off with glass bottles of orange soda in the Wheeler basement, following the age-old tradition of sneaking the boys in the house when the Wheeler parents were asleep.

Nancy and Kali had long since moved their sleepovers to the basement, making up elaborate card games and dancing around to whatever tapes they could find. They also made a habit of using the beige wall phone to good use, making prank calls while twirling the twisting cord around their fingers.

This night, spent listening to the sound of thumping from stomping feet the floor above and chewing on popcorn that was heinously sugary, Nancy and Kali found themselves curled up on the worn couch in the basement, talking slowly in between bouts of silence.

Kali's head was resting on Nancy's arm as she stared out into space until Nancy interrupted her lulling train of thought with a gasp of quiet realization.

"Kali! I just realized!"

"Realized what?" Kali asked, arranging herself so she was properly facing her best friend. The struggle to remain close while still properly facing Nancy proved to be difficult, but the end position

ended with Kali sitting cross legged and perpendicular to her, using the opportunity to take the bowl off the table and onto her lap.

"Have you ever been to a junior high sleepover?" Nancy asked, the answer obvious in the still, cramped air of her basement.

"Why would I ever go to a junior high sleepover? I'm sevent-"

"Well, when you were in junior high you didn't get to go to one. I think there is only one way to fix this," stated Nancy, confident and a bit punch drunk on her cherry soda.

"Time travel?" asked Kali, trying desperately to snark her way through the flashes of her junior high years that attacked her mind. Labs are never really the best place to have a good sleepover, after all.

"No, my beloved Kali," said Nancy, pointedly ignoring the subsequent flutters in both of their stomachs at the endearment, "we are going to give you the junior high experience you *deserve*. It'll be the perfect way to kick this summer off."

"If you say so, then it must be true. What exactly does the junior high experience entail?" Kali asked, taking a handful of popcorn.

"Makeovers first, calling crushes second, and truth or dare third. That's the junior high sleepover activity trinity."

Kali's eyebrows rose and fell, and she grabbed some more popcorn.

"So, are you in?" Nancy asked, smiling with maraschino-stained lips.

"Definitely."

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Steve and Jonathan arrived around 10:30, sneaking in like proper "ninjas", as Steve whispered when all four were properly in the basement. Nancy was ready, brandishing a bag of makeup as if it were a weapon. There was also a loose bag of Halloween effects that she pulled for the novelty, and she commandeered her friends in a cross legged circle. The makeup sat as a centerpiece in the middle,

arranged in a perfect mess of a pile.

"Kali. Since this is your first junior high sleepover, choose who gets made over first," Nancy said, seriously as if she was leading a church service.

Kali, a bit out of her depth, shyly pointed at Jonathan, who was minding his own business, checking the battery on the camera that Nancy made him bring.

"Let's get 'im!" Steve yelled, loud enough that the other three had to shush him through their light giggles.

Nancy let Kali make the first move, handing her the tube of bright pink lipstick. Kali had to bite back a smile as she began to move towards Jonathan, trying to keep him still despite his laughter. She managed to keep him in place long enough for him to receive the messiest application of lipstick possible, but that was child's play compared to when Nancy pulled out her blue eyeshadow.

By the end of the ordeal, Jonathan had experienced the sensation of three pairs of hands on his face at the same time, and he had baby blue eyeshadow that went to his eyebrows. Steve took the liberty of drawing hearts on his cheeks with Nancy's eyeliner pencil. In the end, it was positively fantastic.

By democratic vote ("I didn't study my ass off in Gov to not know that Kali shouldn't make all the decisions, we are a constitutional democracy, dammit!" whispered Steve, nudging Nancy until she gave in), the group then descended on Kali, much to her performative annoyance.

She had sworn to keep her eyes closed, so as to make her makeover a surprise. Kali had gotten oddly familiar with the feeling of sticks and powders being shoved on her face, until she was shocked out of her calm when she felt her hair being pulled.

She cried out, opening her eyes and falling out of the clutches of her friends, ignoring the subsequent shushes, instead focusing on the fact that she had somehow fallen perfectly into Nancy's lap. Why was Nancy even behind her?

"What the hell was that?" she seethed, not making any motion to get out of Nancy's lap.

"Ssh, stop fussing, I'm braiding your hair," Nancy placated, bringing her hands back to where they were on her hair. Kali took a slow breath out, before officially settling into Nancy's lap and closing her eyes again.

"Okay, okay. Do your worst, guys," she said, and it resumed.

"You ruined the penis I was trying to draw on your forehead," muttered Steve, and Kali laughed so hard that she undoubtedly ruined Steve's second attempt.

When they were time, Nancy tapped on Jonathan's shoulder, beckoning towards the camera.

"We gotta keep this memory, I'd say."

Jonathan nodded, and went to grab his camera. Steve took the picture of Kali and Jonathan together, arms sling over each other's shoulders as they smiled widely with their ridiculously made up faces, the flash lighting up the dim basement.

Nancy and Steve went next, both equally decimated by their makeovers. Their picture was somehow more silly than Kali and Jonathan's, due to the faces they pulled and the bunny ears they gave each other.

If the sound of the shutter and the light of the flash didn't alert anyone who was upstairs, Kali was pretty sure that the ensuing laughter at the mental image of all of them together, looking like rejected clowns, did the job. However no one stored downstairs to haul the boys out of the house, so the sleepover activities continued.

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The calling crushes section of the night came at around midnight, which was admittedly ill-planned, since they couldn't casually call anyone at midnight. They instead decided to skip straight to the truth or dare part, rearranging into a proper circle again instead of the malformed dog pile that came from the makeovers.

"So, Steve, truth or dare?" Kali asked through her yawn, starting off the game.

"Give me a dare, baby," he said, imitating some kind of cool guy. The rest of the circle rolled their eyes in response, but continued playing despite his apparent dumbassery.

"Hmm... lick the floor," Kali said, awkwardly trying to land the balance between too extreme and too safe.

Steve only shrugged, bending down awkwardly and letting his tongue graze the prickly carpet. Jonathan crinkled his nose in mild disgust, but they kept their reactions generally temperate to avoid waking anyone up.

"So, Nancy, truth or dare?" Steve asked, keeping the game going despite the musty taste in his mouth.

"Truth."

"If you had to name your kid after a disease, which one would you name it after?" he asked.

"Influenza. Sounds kind of cute. Jonathan? Truth or dare?"

The game continued like this, quiet and restrained. Kali was beginning to fall asleep when she was eventually called on again, and she mumbled her soft "dare" as she leaned in slightly to Nancy's shoulder, mimicking the position from earlier that night.

"Kiss me," Nancy said, laughing with her special exhausted air. Kali lifted her head from Nancy's shoulder, her heart rate speeding up as her eyes flicked down to her crush's blueberry-blue lipstick. Everything seemed to move at half-speed, in a kind of fuzziness that let Kali's often repressed thoughts float to the surface.

Blood rushed in Kali's ears, diluting the sound so she had no idea if the boys were laughing or gasping or crying, and she leaned into Nancy again, and soon she was so close that she could see nothing but her large, doe-like blue eyes.

Time either sped up or slowed, there was no way to be sure through

the veil of 1am decision making. Kali leaned in, and vaguely wondered if she'd have blue lips or if Nancy's lips would become burgundy from Kali's lipstick.

She just had to see for herself.

In the perfect buzz of the basement air, Kali collided with Nancy, reveling, for a moment, that it was as soft and perfect as the imagined it would be. She felt Nancy's hand on her hair, like earlier before with the braiding, and smiled as they separated. Nancy seemed caught in a heavy-lidded laughter, and Kali let her eyesight fall to her lips.

Burgundy was imprinted on the blue of Nancy's lips, and it made Kali smile properly, before turning her head to the boys across from her, who shot her a subtle, congratulatory thumbs up.

What a way to start the summer.

2. June 2nd

Summary for the Chapter:

The morning after, they talk about the kiss and drink some orange juice

based on the dialogue prompt "you look... amazing"

The morning after, paired with two glasses of orange juice and the bright light of a summer morning streaming through the windows, Nancy and Kali decided to talk about the kiss while Mrs. Wheeler was still sleeping.

Both of them were considerably sleepy eyed, considering how long they had stayed up the night before. Their only lifeline to energy seemed to be the plentiful sugar jammed into orange juice, and Jonathan's music, which was stuck in their heads. They would occasionally hum the tunes, or tap them out on Mrs. Wheeler's linoleum tile, and this was the majority of the "conversation" at the beginning of the tired morning.

Kali would hum out a melody, and Nancy would pick it up. She would let her bare feet follow the beat, usually the patterns of the drums, and they would join together in some harmonious moments of stripped down music before falling into silence again.

This happened a few times before Nancy bravely broke the comfortable air, her weak voice piercing it with a kind deliberation.

"So, last night. We kissed," she started, keeping it as pure and simple as possible. She studied Kali's silent response, from the widening of her eyes to the way that the corner of her mouth seemed to turn up at the memory.

"Why are you looking at me like that?" Kali asked, seeming to catch the way that Nancy's gaze latched hawk-like onto her.

"Because we kissed last night."

"We did."

A tense bout of silence passed, and Kali reached for another sip of her orange juice. Nancy began to worry: what if Kali didn't share her feelings? What if she secretly hated it? What if-

"I know that you probably don't feel the same way, Nancy, so I'm not going to push anything-"

"Feel what? Because I really liked kissing you."

"Really?"

There was another stretch of silence, where there was nothing but the shared flushes on their face and the rustle of trees, now audible. There was a creak in a nearby room, the shift of blankets on cotton sheets some yards away.

"I didn't think that I would be confessing my... feelings to you looking like this," Nancy admitted, voice just one hint above a whisper. Kali's eyebrows creased before she broke the silence herself.

"What?" she asked, stuck on the perfect curve of Nancy's jaw, and the deer-like look of her eyes. How could this be a somehow imperfect look? How could this be somehow unworthy of a moment like this.

"Kali, I look like I have a hangover. There's still makeup on my face, I'm sure the bags under my eyes could carry groceries. I haven't even brushed my hair!"

Nancy had taken on an almost panicked look, as if she was shocked by her own appearance, and it only made Kali more confused. Nancy let the words hang in the air for a second, before gesturing at the girl from across her to respond. The morning easiness had been eliminated, and Nancy's frame held a high strung quality to it, like she could snap at any moment.

"Oh my god, you can be so dumb sometimes," Kali said frankly, absolutely dumbfounded, before reaching out to hold Nancy's jaw, "You look... amazing."

"Kiss me."

Kali didn't wait for another second, diving in to taste the orange juice

that left remnants on Nancy's lips, her hand still dragging over the sharp line of her jaw. Nancy responded in kind, hand reaching up to Kali's hair, still tangled from sleep. They separated for a second, to catch their breath.

"Nancy, do you want to be my girlfriend?" she asked, memory supplying her with some of the girlfriends of days past, of kisses and sneaking into windows and secrets kept from parents.

"You can be so dumb sometimes," Nancy responded with the beginnings of a smile, and Kali took that as a "yes", considering that Nancy resumed the kissing right afterwards. They continued the heavenly ebb and flow of early morning making out until the sound of slippers in the hallway made them separate, too excited to be respectfully sheepish.

It turns out that the early riser was Mike, who was still half asleep, stumbling like a zombie to the refrigerator. He was yawning into the back of his hand, using the other hand to pull open the door of the fridge. He stared in at the colorful food and drinks inside, before shutting it again. He turned to Nancy and Kali, only half-registering their presences.

"Where's the orange juice?" he asked, eyes half lidded and voice only a couple of steps away from slurring his words.

"Right here," Nancy said, holding up the carton. He blindly grabbed it, and began walking out of the kitchen.

"Bud, do you want a cup?" Kali asked, focus being pulled away from the heavenly sprinkling of freckles on Nancy's nose and instead to Mike, who looked as if he were about to fall over.

"Nah. G'night."

As he exited the kitchen properly, Nancy and Kali turned to each other, lost in some kind of giggling confusion.

"What the hell was that?" Kali asked the second she heard the door to Mike's room close.

"Mike sleepwalks sometimes. If he spills juice on his sheets, you and I

were never here,” Nancy said, finishing off her juice and heading towards the sink to rinse it.

“And what are you doing now?”

“Erasing the evidence. Hand it over,” and Kali complied, downing the remaining contents and passing the cup over to her girlfriend(!), who cleaned them out as quickly as possible, before drying them with the fabric of her pajama shirt and carefully placing it in the glass cupboard.

“Wanna scram before Karen wakes up?”

“Don’t call her *Karen*, she always gets pissed when you do that. And if you are forbidden to come to my house, this is going to get much harder. And yes. We can see if Steve’s in the diner and tell him the good news,” said Nancy, a bit giddier than usual. Kali smiled, realizing why.

“Steve’ll be ecstatic, I bet.”

“Not as ecstatic as me, I bet.”

Kali let her smile take up her whole face, before making her way to the basement to change into her day clothes. Steve would have a lot of excitement to compete with, absolutely.

Notes for the Chapter:

Thank you so much for reading!! Please please please comment, and feel free to leave me prompts in the comments or in my ask box @thesubtextmachine on tumblr!

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Author's Note:

Thanks for reading this! This chapter is based on a prompt I got from an anon, a dialogue one for "ssh, stop fussing, I'm braiding your hair". You can leave prompts at my tumblr @thesubtextmachine, or you

can just put them in the comments. Even if you don't have a prompt, still comment, they brighten up my day!